

Buffalo Soldiers

"Buffalo Soldiers" was the name given to African-American cavalrymen by their native-American antagonists during the INDIAN WARS in the post-Civil War American West. The first men to serve in all-black army units did so in the Union Army, during the Civil War. The initial all-black regiment, the 54th Massachusetts, trained by its white commander, Col. Robert G. Shaw, suffered heavy casualties in a heroic, though unsuccessful attempt to capture Fort Wagner at Charleston (S.C.) harbor in July 1863. In all, about 209,000 ex-slaves and free blacks served in the Union Army, and more than 68,000 of them died in battle or from wounds or disease.

After the Civil War, Congress authorized two cavalry regiments and four infantry regiments of black troops, who were led by white officers. The 9th and 10th cavalry regiments were formed in 1866 and were used to control "hostile" Indian tribes in the West for the next 25 years. Despite prejudicial treatment by some army officers, as well as open prejudice displayed by many civilians in frontier towns, the black regiments performed effectively. They fought innumerable skirmishes and running battles with Indian warriors in the Great Plains, western Texas, the southwestern desert, and the mountains of Colorado. One company of the 9th regiment fought in the last battle of the Indian Wars, at WOUNDED KNEE, S.Dak., in December 1890. The black troops were proud to be called Buffalo Soldiers; in fact, the regimental crest of the 10th cavalry bore the figure of a buffalo.

Bibliography: Downey, Fairfax D., *The Buffalo Soldiers in the Indian Wars* (1969); Leckie, William H., *The Buffalo Soldiers* (1967; repr. 1975).

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20th January 1900

My dear Mr. [Name] I have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 17th inst.

and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

I am sorry to hear that you are feeling unwell, and hope that you will be able to return to your duties as soon as possible. I am sure that the authorities will be most sympathetic towards you in this matter, and will do all in their power to facilitate your recovery.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

[Name]

[Address]

[City]

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civil war

scalawags

After the U.S. Civil War, scalawag was a derogatory name for white Southerners who helped implement RECONSTRUCTION (1865-77) of the defeated South. The scalawags, who were usually Republicans, cooperated with blacks and with Northern CARPETBAGGERS who had traveled south to participate in Reconstruction. Many white Southerners resented the economic, social, and political reforms that the scalawags helped bring about, and, with the resurgence of the Democratic party in the South in the 1870s, their influence diminished.

Bibliography: Carter, Dan T., *When the War Was Over* (1985); Foner, Eric, *Reconstruction* (1988); Randall, J. G., and Donald, David, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (1969); Stamp, Kenneth M., *The Era of Reconstruction* (1965).